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UNCLAS VIENNA 000455

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR CA/OCS/CI - G. DeBoer and G. Keiser

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Ambassador asks Justice Minister's Attention to
Sylvester Case

1. The Ambassador took the opportunity of his first meeting with Justice Minister Karin Miklautsch - a brief visit February 14 that focused on a time-sensitive legal issue - to raise the Sylvester child abduction case. The Ambassador outlined the history of the case for the Minister, stressing the Austrian government's judicial and administrative missteps, Mr. Sylvester's two successful judgments in the European Court of Human Rights, and the continuing serious concerns of the USG in the matter, up to and including President Bush. The Ambassador described Mr. Sylvester's frustrated efforts over many years to obtain reasonable access to his daughter, including visits to the U.S., and assured the Minister that U.S. interest in the case was and would remain extremely high.

2. The Ambassador urged the Minister to become personally involved in the child abduction case. He asked her and the Justice Ministry staff to renew the dialogue with the U.S. with the immediate object of exploring ways to allow Mr. Sylvester and his daughter to enjoy a meaningful family life together. The Ambassador said that the harsh conditions of previous visitations had to be eased to allow Mr. Sylvester more liberal and normal access to his daughter.

3. The Minister listened carefully, took extensive notes, said she would consult with her staff to review options for moving forward, and would get back to the Embassy with comments and ideas. She offered her new chief of staff (who was in the meeting), as the Sylvester case day-to-day contact with the Consul General.

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